

## Foreword

*“Every industrial nation is consuming its capital and counting on the profit side of the ledger. This is not a sustainable situation over the long term. Our natural capital is our forests, wildlife habitats, fresh water lakes, rivers, ocean, soil, scenic beauty, biodiversity, minerals, etc. We are not just toying with nature; we are compromising the capacity of natural systems to do what they need to do to preserve a livable world.”* Gaylord Nelson, 2004

A livable world. Our beautiful landscape and our clean water, breathable air, and healthy soil. Our native plants and animals, our free-flowing rivers, and our rich forests and prairies. Do we take these things for granted or will we pause, take stock, and work together to preserve what makes Wisconsin unique?

*Wisconsin's Strategy for Wildlife Species of Greatest Conservation Need* does just that for wildlife species and the places they call home. The *Strategy* takes a thorough look at the animal species that are part of Wisconsin's natural heritage, identifies those that most need our attention because they are declining or are dependent on places that are declining, and provides a roadmap of conservation actions that we—collectively, as part of the whole conservation community--can take to ensure that Wisconsin's natural capital is preserved. The vast amount of information found in this plan was gathered by our state's leading conservation scientists; it will allow us to use the best available science to make critical decisions about Species of Greatest Conservation Need along with the habitats on which they depend.

The *Strategy* is significant in that it recognizes that conservation is made possible by a partnership of government and citizens. Federal funding for the conservation actions in the *Strategy's* roadmap will be used by all of us—conservation groups, state agencies, Native American tribes—as we accomplish our conservation goals. Here in Wisconsin, we will match these federal funds with our own, along with our hands-on sweat equity. In the end, we'll all benefit by keeping species off of the endangered and threatened species list and by preserving this part of Wisconsin's natural capital.

Every poll conducted in Wisconsin regarding conservation has had the same results: Wisconsinites value wildlife, forests, rivers, water quality, and scenic value. Gaylord Nelson was such an effective leader because he was able to identify our enduring values and focus on the issues that were most fundamental to this state, nation, and world. This includes our environment and all the pieces of it. Every time we pour a glass of water, breathe the air in our cities, swim in our lakes, and enjoy the beauty of Wisconsin's natural heritage, we ought to say thank you to Gaylord Nelson for all that he's given each of us.

This *Strategy* and its road map are the next steps in an important journey to preserve this enduring environment value—Wisconsin's biological diversity.



Governor Jim Doyle  
State of Wisconsin  
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